

POLICY MANUAL



SECTION: Human Resources
SUBJECT: Early Safe Return to Work
APPROVED BY: Director, Human Resources

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Effective Date: April 2016
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Scope

This policy applies to all Horizon Plastics employees who have suffered an occupational injury or illness.

Purpose

Horizon Plastics will make every effort to assist an injured employee with work related injuries / illnesses to stay at work (SAW) or to return to work (RTW). The RTW procedure will ensure that as a company we are committed and able to supply modified / accommodated duties to all employees with work related injuries / illnesses, where possible, without undue hardship.

A return to work program helps the injured employee stay active and involved, and thus contribute to their quality of life.

Disclosure of Information: In order to facilitate an effective and appropriate RTW Case Plan for an injured worker, the Manager / Supervisor and Return to Work Coordinator will be allowed access to the affected employee's restrictions and functional abilities (cognitive, environmental and physical).

Note: - It is not the intent of the Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW) to create new position within Horizon Plastics in order to be able to accommodate modified / suitable work.

Procedure

Horizon Plastics recognizes that a temporarily injured employee can and should be performing meaningful and productive work. The ESRTW gives structure and organization to this principle and recognizes the employer, and employee(s) joint responsibility to participate in the rehabilitation process.

Specifically:

- The work must be productive and the result must have value.
- The work provided must not aggravate the employee's condition.
- The employee's condition must not constitute an additional hazard to the employee or fellow employee(s) while performing the duties assigned.
- The work must assist the employee in returning to their original position, if possible.
- The duration of the modified duty will be determined at the start of the program, wherever possible.
- Prior to starting the modified duty the employee and employer will sign an agreement with respect to the hours of work, the reporting requirements and the nature of the modified duty position.

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- The Functional Abilities Form (FAF) and the requirements of the employer will be reviewed for the modified duty.
- The employee is required to supply medical progress reports every two weeks or as frequently as may be needed.
- Temporary modified / suitable work will be offered for a limited period of time. In the case where return to regular duties does not occur as expected, the workplace parties will meet to revise and reassess the continuing need for the availability of modified / alternative duties.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employer:

- To provide a fair and consistent rehabilitation program for employees with work related injuries / illnesses where possible, without undue hardship.
- To provide meaningful employment for temporarily injured employees and promote the ESRTW procedure.
- To facilitate communication between the department, the employee, the treating agency of the employee, and Human Resources.
- To explain the objectives and requirements of the ESRTW procedure.

Human Resources:

- To determine in consultation with the Manager / Supervisor, if the position can be modified, without undue hardship.
- Meet with the employee and establish written goals and objectives. These will be established and agreed upon by the employee and the Manager / Supervisor.
- To develop, in consultation with the employee's medical practitioner, the employee and the immediate Manager / Supervisor, a modified duty program.
- Determine and maintain medical monitoring and treatment with the use of the Functional Abilities Form. The frequency of medical contacts will be determined on a case by case basis.
- To monitor the progress of the employee's rehabilitation through bi-weekly meetings with the employee and the Manager / Supervisor.
- Ensure medical follow-up is obtained at a schedule defined by the employer. The schedule of the meetings will be decided on a case by case basis.
- Liaise with the treating agency and other agencies, when required.

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- Complete Section I of the Return to Work – Record of Contact for the Manager / Supervisor.

Manager / Supervisor:

- To advise the employee of the availability of work hardening or transitional work and provide the required forms.
- Liaise with Human Resources regarding any payroll issues.
- To assist in the creation of, and support the employee's ESRTW plan.
- To maintain communication with the employee on modified duties and monitor their rehabilitation progress and effectiveness, on an individual case by case basis.
- To inform other employees in the department of the procedure goals (while ensuring the injured worker's privacy).
- To communicate and assist in the evaluation of the procedure's effectiveness, regular meetings are to be scheduled with the employee.
- Communicate with the injured worker while the employee is off work (bi-weekly or as frequently as required, on a case by case basis). When an employee is on modified duties, communication should be daily.
- The communication protocol is to be maintained when the employee is on modified duties or off work as the result of a work related injury.

Employee:

- To maintain regular contact with the Manager / Supervisor
- To take an active role in developing their modified work program and successful rehabilitation.
- To communicate any concerns to their Manager / Supervisor and the Return to Work Coordinator.
- To obtain the necessary forms from the treating agencies as may be required by the employer.
- To ensure that other scheduled rehabilitation activities such as physical therapy or doctor's appointments are continued while on modified duty. These appointments are to be arranged whenever possible during non-work hours.
- To co-operate with all requests for documentation as required by the WSIB and the Employer.

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Union:

- To counsel its members on the benefits of co-operation in the ESRTW program and co-operate in the placement and full rehabilitation of workers requiring modified duties.

Health Professionals:

- Act as a resource, provide up to date medical information, and complete the documentation as requested.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (W.S.I.B):

- Process claims: act as a resource; make entitlement decisions; monitor activities and progress, provide dispute resolution services.
- Reporting requirements to the W.S.I.B.: Wage changes, changes in duties / duration of program, failure to cooperate, end of program.

Communication

- Revisions or modifications of this procedure will be communicated to the Manager / Supervisor, who will then communicate any revisions to their employees within one month.
- An annual trends summary will be prepared by the Return to Work Coordinator and given to the Co-chairs of the JH+SC.

Refer to the Roles and Safe Work practice section (see below) for specific communication requirements.

The method of communication referred to in the RTW Program includes by phone, fax or written. Any phone contact must be documented on the Contact Log. Both parties (Manager / Supervisor and the injured worker) are responsible to maintain documentation on the RTW plan.

Roles and Safe Work Practice

- All employees are required to report any injury / illness to their Manager / Supervisor immediately.
- Upon learning of the work-related injury / illness the Manager / Supervisor will complete an Incident / Injury Investigation Report (not included).
- If it is determined the injured worker is going to require stay at work (SAW) or return to work (RTW) the Manager / Supervisor and Return to Work Coordinator will use the following options to determine what is needed and decide whether a case plan is needed or not.

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Option 1: Fit for Work and no accommodation needed: Employee returns to work, no case plan needed. Employee and Manager / Supervisor maintain communication.

Option 2: Fit for Work and straight forward accommodation: Employee returns to work, case plan developed to include accommodations.

Option 3: Fit for Work to be determined: Case plan required.

Evaluation

- Using workplace inspections, Incident / Injury investigation forms and the “Return to Work Self-Assessment Guide for Ontario Workplaces” the Health + Safety Manager in partnership with the JH+SC will review the effectiveness of the program. Revisions approved by management to the policy and/or procedure will be completed and communicated by the Health +Safety Manager, H.R. or Manager / Supervisor.

Forms

- Return to Work – Record of Contact
- Return to Work Case Plan
- Return to Work Progress Report
- Return to Work – Closure /Evaluation Report
- WSIB Functional Abilities Form (FAF); Available in Human Resources

Reference Materials

- National Institute of Disability Management (www.nidmar.ca)
- Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (www.wsib.on.ca), “Return to Work Self-Assessment Guide for Ontario Workplaces” (downloadable from www.wsib.on.ca)